

# South Carolina's Current Developments

*Helping People Help the Land*

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

June/July 2006

From the Office of the  
State Conservationist  
*Walter W. Douglas*



Dear NRCSers,

The recent publication of the NRCS Strategic Plan is helping us target our goals and focus efforts on the most crucial components involved in helping people help the land. The plan identifies three major strategies including a market-based, watershed approach, and most importantly, cooperative conservation. In the quest to achieve our conservation goals, the plan reminds us to remember the importance of service, partnership and technical excellence. I know that the South Carolina Conservation Partnership has already embraced these three missions, because we've proven our commitment to excellence time and time again. I think this plan serves as an excellent blueprint in helping guide us in the positive direction we are headed.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns recently announced the funding of 4,404 Conservation Security Program (CSP) contracts across the United States. In South Carolina, 62 contracts were accepted, totaling over 10 million dollars for the life of the contracts. The conservation benefits derived from these acres protected under CSP will help South Carolina farmers improve their operations and increase the quality of our natural resources, benefiting all of us.

I am also looking forward to welcoming Earth Team Volunteer State Coordinators from the East and Southeast regions to Charleston in August. Participants will be treated to a tour of a South Carolina Earth Team project involving dune restoration on Sullivan's Island. I will be proud to highlight the important work that our volunteers do to help us protect the natural resources in our state.

photo by Cliff Eaddy, York NRCS District Conservationist

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter W. Douglas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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# Notes from the Field



## State Conservationist Stars in National OPM Commercial

*30-second Spot Filmed in Lexington and Horry Counties*

Lights, camera, action! USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Walt Douglas got used to hearing those words during the filming of a national commercial for U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). In early 2006, OPM contacted Douglas about starring in one of four commercials designed to combat the “federal retirement tsunami.” The ad campaign was officially launched in Washington, DC, at the National Press Club on May 1, 2006. The event aired live on CSPAN where OPM Director Linda Springer explained the campaign and recognized the four stars from different federal agencies that were selected to appear in the spots.

“This campaign helps raise the awareness of potential employees around the country of the exciting and rewarding careers they can find in the federal government,” explained Springer. At the press conference, Douglas, along with the other commercial stars, was thanked for the time and energy devoted to filming the spots. The commercial, featuring Douglas and highlighting the work of

NRCS, was filmed in Horry and Lexington Counties in South Carolina.

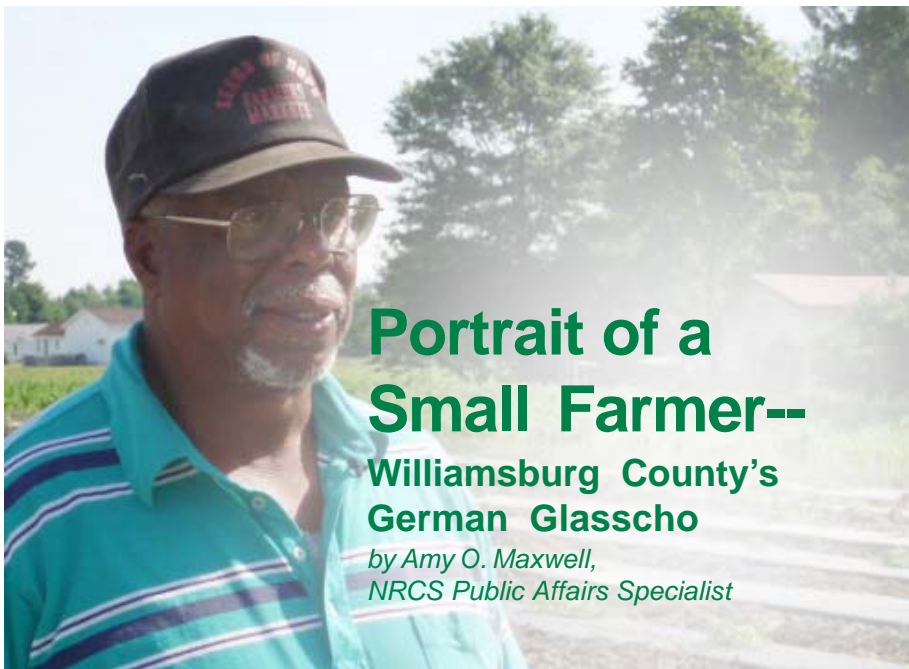
A professional film crew from Wilmington, North Carolina, was hired to film the 30-second commercial. “I had no idea that this commercial would be aired nationally,” said Douglas, “and it wasn’t until I was invited to Washington, DC, for the OPM press conference and saw all the reporters and television cameras that I realized what a big deal it was. I am honored to have been a part of this campaign, and proud that South Carolina is featured so that others around the nation can see our beautiful state.”

The spots will soon begin airing throughout the nation. The four commercials, including the spot featuring South Carolina and Douglas, can be viewed at [http://www.opm.gov/Video\\_Library/RecruitmentShowcase/index.asp](http://www.opm.gov/Video_Library/RecruitmentShowcase/index.asp). For more information, contact USDA-NRCS South Carolina Public Affairs Specialist Amy Maxwell at (803) 765-5402 or [amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov](mailto:amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov).



*NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas was selected to appear in a national OPM commercial developed to recruit federal employees.*





## Portrait of a Small Farmer-- Williamsburg County's German Glasscho

by Amy O. Maxwell,  
NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

German Glasscho comes across as a soft-spoken man in the first few moments of meeting him. At first glance, he may even appear shy. But, ask him about his small farm and his eyes light up with enthusiasm. Farming is an important part of his life, and he'll tell you it's in his blood. Glasscho, a Williamsburg County native, is a small farmer in the community of Sandy Bay, nestled in the quiet town of Cades, South Carolina. He is passionate about farming, and a visit to his 20-acre truck crop operation illustrates his dedication to conservation. He speaks eloquently about his life-long career as a farmer, and boasts like a proud father on the health of his produce which includes potatoes, watermelons, tomatoes, cantaloupe, okra, butter beans, peas, cucumbers, and other small crops.

A participant in the USDA-NRCS Small Farmer Initiative, Glasscho installed a well for irrigation. Funds from the initiative also helped him diversify his farm with grass plantings and installation of a fence for goats. The Small Farmer Initiative (SFI) was created to increase participation by small scale and limited resource farmers in USDA programs. "This effort will help us better serve small farmers who may be economically challenged and cannot produce the quantities of a large farmer in today's competitive agricultural market," explained NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas.

SFI funds assist farmers whose entire farming operation consists of 197 acres or less. At least 10 percent of the cropland acres must be planted to alternative crops to be eligible. Contracts last five

years and participants are required to keep financial, nutrient and pest management records for the length of the contract. NRCS Small Farmer Liaison Wilfred Pace said this program reaches out to customers who may have not ranked high enough in previous USDA program sign-ups. "South Carolina was one of the pioneers of the NRCS Small Farmer Initiative in 2005. The key to this program is extensive and innovative outreach. We are really trying to target the small farmer by going into their communities and letting them know that this financial and

technical assistance is available."

Glasscho markets his products through two unique programs. For example, his farm was designated as a Certified Roadside Market under a program of the SC Department of Agriculture. On Wednesdays and Fridays, his picturesque farm serves as a miniature market where locals purchase fresh produce. His farm also serves as a market for the Seeds of Hope Program. This is a network of farm-stands in South Carolina that are located on church properties. Founded twenty years ago, the program helps farmers like Glasscho find places to sell their produce.

A third generation farmer, Glasscho inherited his farm, and his love of the land, from his father and grandfather. "I farm because I love it and because I want to carry on the tradition that I grew up learning to cherish." A devoted conservationist, Glasscho consults with local NRCS District Conservationist Trinette Vereen. "Mr. Glasscho conducts a soil test every year in an effort to control the amount of chemicals he uses on his produce," explained Vereen. "He is very conscientious about protecting soil and water quality." In his ongoing efforts to be an outstanding steward of the land, he plans to install a grass filter strip along the edge of his crop field. The filter strip will provide a buffer between his crops and a nearby pond on his farm, thereby enhancing water quality and preventing runoff of harmful chemicals.

*continued...*

Glasscho has also maximized his profits as a small farmer through the use of plastic mulch and drip irrigation. This is an environmentally sound farming practice that conserves soil moisture and minimizes the use of some agricultural chemicals that control weeds. While reducing spread of weeds, it also decreases soil compaction and can increase growth of the crops. In fact, plant growth under plastic mulch is often twice as large. This is a time saving profit-booster for small farmers who have limited acreage and oftentimes work alone. As a result, his vegetable crops have shown a significant increase in earliness, yield, and quality.

As mayor of nearby Greeleyville since 2002, Glasscho is well-respected in Williamsburg County. "Mr. Glasscho is a pillar in the community. He is always willing to help others in need and his love for farming is contagious," said Vereen. As an excellent role model for small farmers, Glasscho says farming is a labor of love. "I do it because it's what I've always done, and because I can't imagine my life without it."



left to right: Small Farmer German Glasscho, Williamsburg NRCS District Conservationist Trinette Vereen, and SC NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas.

## Oconee Conservation Partnership Celebrates "Tree-mendous Treasures" with Local Students

On a sunny day in late April, hundreds of enthusiastic schoolchildren from Oconee County gathered at South Cove Park. Located on the west shore of Lake Keowee, the park was a perfect location to celebrate natural resources education. Oconee County partners, including SCDNR, the SWCD, NRCS, and Clemson Extension, worked together to congratulate the schoolchildren for their participation in an essay contest for grades 5-8, as well as a bulletin board contest for kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

"Tree-mendous Treasures" was this year's theme for the county-wide competition, and the kids really got creative with their essays and bulletin board creations. Congratulations to the winners!

Before lunch was served, the kids enjoyed an up-close-and-personal encounter with several archeological treasures. NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist Jim Errante, who serves North and South Carolina, demonstrated spear throwing and fire making-techniques.



NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist Jim Errante demonstrates spear throwing to a group of attentive Oconee County schoolchildren while NRCS District Conservationist Heather Stephens looks on.



**W**etlands are a vital part of the environment. Acting as a transition zone in watersheds, they are the link between the land and water. This is why many landowners, such as Mark Behr of Orangeburg, South Carolina, are restoring wetlands that were previously drained. Behr enrolled over 500 acres of his land in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in November 2004. Restoration was completed this April, and the area is returning back to its natural state.

Behr received technical assistance from NRCS District Conservationist Frank Stephens. "The property is part of a larger WRP project area in the Four Holes Swamp of Orangeburg County," he said. Four Holes Swamp begins as a small swamp stream in Calhoun County and flows 62 miles through four counties before it joins the Edisto River and the Atlantic Ocean. In all, the Four Holes Swamp WRP project involves six permanent, adjoining easements that will restore over 3,000 acres of wetlands in the 450,000-acre Four Holes Swamp.

Four Holes Swamp is different from the usual river bottom swamp. It is a swamp-stream system fed largely by springs and runoff from surrounding higher areas. No major unbroken channel occupies the floodplain, yet swamp water moves slowly seaward through a network of braided waterways.



Mark Behr, right, and NRCS District Conservationist Frank Stephens, discuss the WRP site.

"This project was created to help restore natural floodplain conditions and water flow through the Four Holes Swamp," explained Stephens. "The wetland restoration efforts will help improve wildlife habitat conditions for a variety of upland and wetland species."



## Wetlands Restored in South Carolina's Four Holes Swamp

by Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

*A WRP easement is helping to restore this former wetland by removing blockages that prevented the natural flow of water.*

Logging activity by the previous owners of Behr's property meant that fill material was used to create a series of access roads for logging trucks, as well as a small rail system. "The access road system significantly altered the normal flow of water, acting as a series of dams through the swamp," said Behr.

WRP has allowed Behr to restore this former wetland by removing the pipes and replacing them with geo-textile and rock lined fords, helping to restore the natural hydrology of the land. Old logging decks and isolated upland areas are being used as wildlife openings to create more habitat diversity for upland species, such as deer, turkey, rabbit and quail. Behr manages these openings using both planted and native vegetation management, such as rotational disking. Prescribed burning is also utilized to reduce unwanted vegetation.

"The conversion of this area back to its natural condition is great for the native vegetation and wildlife species that thrive here," stated Behr. "In the future, I plan to continue these management practices to ensure the land remains in this beautiful, natural state, forever."

For more information, please contact Orangeburg NRCS at (803) 534-2409.

## Georgetown County Farm Reaches Out to Community

by Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

"Feeding the hungry, guiding children and making our community a better place." This is the mission of Outreach Farm--a phrase that accurately depicts what this non-profit organization does. With a cattle farm in Hemingway and crop farm on Pawley's Island, the mission of Outreach Farm is to raise and provide high quality beef and produce, at no cost, to non-profit organizations that feed the hungry in South Carolina. Much of the farm labor is done thanks to the help of disadvantaged boys from local schools. In addition, NRCS' Small Farmer Initiative provided financial and technical assistance to install several conservation practices. Working with NRCS District Conservationists Debbie Mann and Trinette Vereen, Outreach Farm Executive Director Mike LoVullo installed cross fencing, heavy use areas, and water troughs on the farm in Hemingway.

LoVullo, a local homebuilder and former volunteer cook at a homeless shelter, came to South Carolina from Vermont. His concern about the lack of protein in foods distributed to the hungry motivated him to find a solution. With the help of the local community and volunteers, Outreach Farm was established in January 2002.

"I am really grateful for the overwhelming support we have received from this community," said LoVullo. "Without their support, this place would not have been possible." Outreach Farm operates solely on donated funds, supplies and labor. They have also received financial support from the Georgetown and Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's).

In Hemingway, the cattle farm includes nearly 50 head of beef cattle on more than 70 acres of leased land. LoVullo said that by 2007 the goal is to breed their own cows, rather than purchase them.

While 50 head of beef cattle may seem a small number to some, the food they provide goes a long way. One steer provides about 500-600 pounds of meat, which equals 1,250-1,500 meals! Currently, Outreach Farm supplies enough beef to provide 800 meals a month.

LoVullo is also concerned about the protection of soil and water resources at Outreach Farm. With NRCS assistance, cross fencing was installed for better grazing management, allowing the cattle to graze one pasture at a time, while the other pastures have a chance to regrow. There are also heavy-use areas and water

troughs, which receive water from a well by way of underground water lines.

In addition to cattle, the farm also provides fresh vegetables to local charities through crop farms in both locations. Both farms are planted, maintained and harvested by two non-profit youth organizations, which also receive beef and vegetables from Outreach Farm. The boys, ranging in age from 7 to 17,

benefit from the nutritious food, but also learn about hard work and team building. "The goal of Outreach Farm is to build upon the character of these boys and instill within them a sense of pride and community spirit," explained LoVullo.

"Outreach Farm is an organization that cares," said Mann. "Not only do they care about the conservation of the land, but also the lives that they impact everyday."

For more information, please contact the Georgetown USDA Service Center at 843-546-7808.



left to right: Williamsburg NRCS District Conservationist Trinette Vereen, Outreach Farm Director Mike LoVullo, and Georgetown NRCS District Conservationist Debbie Mann.



## Chesterfield Grazing Land Permanently Protected

by Amy O. Maxwell, State Public Affairs Specialist

Privately owned grazing land is an important natural resource. But, in South Carolina, as well as across the nation, native grasslands are disappearing. Grassland loss through conversion to other land uses such as cropland, parcels for rural home sites, invasive species, woody vegetation, and suburban and urban development threatens grassland. That's why the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) was created—to protect and restore these valuable areas.

In Chesterfield County, South Carolina, over 250 acres of grassland at Tumbleweed Farms is being protected through a permanent GRP easement. A program administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency, in cooperation with the Forest Service, GRP is a voluntary program that helps landowners restore and protect grassland while maintaining grazing lands.

Landowner N.H. Beaver, a resident of Rock Hill, South Carolina, owns the GRP easement which is managed by Wayne Chapman. Totalling over 500 acres, the cattle farm has also been improved with conservation practices installed through the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS District Conservationist Charles Babb worked with Beaver and Chapman to protect the resources on the cattle farm. "Through EQIP, this grazing land was im-

proved with fencing and twelve water troughs. Now, with the GRP easement, this area will be forever protected from development." Babb also said that NRCS provided technical assistance to Dr. Beaver and Chapman in regards to the farm plan. "We recommended that he establish switchgrass and eradicate some of his fescue acreage and replace with a warm season grass. We also helped them understand the negative aspects of overstocking, and illustrated how to balance forage with animal numbers to protect the overall health of the acreage."

GRP requires that the landowner agree to create a healthy grassland and habitat for plant and animal species. NRCS Grassland Specialist David Findley said, "This acreage was planted with switchgrass [a native warm season grass] which creates a clumped structure of native grass. This is ideal habitat for wildlife species that depend on grasses for food, nesting, and cover." The open structure of these grasses allows mobility for small wildlife through the field. Switchgrass is also adapted to a wide variety of soils, including wet sites. Animals that benefit from the grass planting include quail, deer, rabbit, turkey, migratory songbirds, and small mammals such as voles and mice. "Native warm season grass is more management-intensive, but it's better for wildlife and it's drought tolerant," added Findley.

Babb said that the acreage in the GRP easement consists of 37 acres of switchgrass, 53 acres of hybrid bermuda, and 143 acres of tall fescue mixed with clover, vetch, and orchard grass. "All of the grass is fenced and managed for grazing with a rotational system." The environmental benefits of the easement are accentuated by the fact that the land is adjacent to the Great Pee Dee River. "That means that the water quality of the river system will be protected from runoff of pesticides and other chemicals," explained Babb.

"The positive impact that GRP is making on this farm, as well as the water sources that surround it, are immeasurable," said Babb. "It gives me peace of mind to know that my children and grandchildren will be able to see open spaces like this and that it can't be developed."



*Farm Manager Wayne Chapman has worked with NRCS District Conservationist Charles Babb and Grassland Specialist David Findley to create healthy grassland and habitat for plant and animal species.*

## SC NRCS to Fund 62 Conservation Security Program Contracts

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the funding of 4,404 Conservation Security Program (CSP) contracts across the United States, Puerto Rico and Guam. This included 62 South Carolina contracts, totaling over \$10 million dollars for the life of the contracts. Landowners in the Lower Pee Dee Watershed were eligible during the sign-up period which ended in March. Eligible acreage included land in parts of Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg Counties.

"This year more producers enrolled in the Conservation Security Program, demonstrating that incentives work for voluntary conservation programs," said USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas. "The conservation benefits derived from this program will help South Carolina farmers improve their operations and increase the quality of our natural resources."

The FY 2006 CSP contracts offered nationally cover more than 3.7 million acres of private land in 60 watersheds nationwide, which translates to nearly a \$440 million long-term investment in conservation over the next ten years.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that rewards private landowners for their ongoing stewardship of natural resources.

Douglas said he is pleased with the number of contracts funded. "South Carolina had one of the highest funding rates for CSP in the Southeast." Landowners receiving funding will be contacted by their local NRCS district conservationist. "I think our success in securing these CSP contracts is due in large part to the hard work and dedication of our NRCS field personnel and partners," concluded Douglas. "The number of contracts is also an indication of the dedication of South Carolina's farmers and landowners who are committed to protecting soil and water resources." CSP will be available each year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows.

The state-by-state breakdown can be viewed by accessing the following:

<http://www.usda.gov/documents/statebystatenrcscsp062006.pdf>.

## SC Envirothon Competitors Contemplate Climate Change

High school students from across the state participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> annual South Carolina Envirothon Competition held on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-one teams registered to test their knowledge of forestry, wildlife, aquatics, soils, and the topic for 2006: *Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate*.

After rounds of testing, the final team standing was determined. The Calhoun Falls Team from Abbeville County took top honors in First Place, each winning \$500 scholarships. The Spartanburg Vikings from Spartanburg County came in Second Place, each winning \$250 scholarships, and the Strom Thurmond FFA team from Edgefield County came in Third Place, each winning \$125 scholarships.

The Calhoun Falls team will go on to compete at the Canon Envirothon hosted by Manitoba, Canada, from July 23<sup>rd</sup> -29<sup>th</sup>.



Students at the SC Envirothon competed in a variety of subjects, including soil science.



Abbeville County's Calhoun Falls High School was the top team in the 2006 SC Envirothon.





## News from Our Partners



### Small Alligators Not a Problem

Most alligator complaints involve animals too small to present a threat to people or pets, according to Walt Rhodes, alligator project biologist with the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), based at the Santee Coastal Reserve in McClellanville. Of the more than 750 alligator complaints investi-



gated by SCDNR each season, more than half involve small alligators less than 5 feet in length. The average body weight of alligators 3 feet in length is not quite 4 pounds, while four-foot alligators average about 11 pounds, and 5 feet gators average only about 22 pounds. Children and dogs that exceed these body weights by a factor of several times are not in danger.

"For many out-of-state visitors and some native South Carolinians, an alligator is an alligator, and they are all viewed as a creature that does nothing but eat children and pets," said Rhodes. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Alligators are shy animals that prefer to keep their distance from humans. However, alligators that are fed by humans lose their wariness. For this reason, it is illegal to feed alligators in South Carolina.

"Alligators are large, powerful animals," Rhodes said, "and people should keep their distance from them and keep their pets out of the water. We suggest that people not swim in areas frequented by alligators, especially around sunrise and sunset, when they are active. It is important to use common sense in areas inhabited by alligators."

If an alligator is causing problems, contact the nearest SCDNR office. For an after-hours emergency, call Operation Game Thief at 1-800-922-5431.

### SCDNR Protects 8,560 Acres in Marion County

In December 2005, SCDNR purchased 8,560-acres of the Marsh tract near Marion for \$7 million from Marsh Furniture Company, based in High Point, N.C. The Marsh tract is Marion's second such preserve, owned and managed by SCDNR, and ensures the permanent protection of significant wildlife habitat on the Great Pee Dee River and protects water quality in the region. The Marsh Furniture Heritage Preserve and Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was dedicated in a special public ceremony on Friday, April 7, 2006, in Marion County.

Physical features of the property include 8.5 miles of river frontage and a significant bottomland hardwood forest on the Great Pee Dee River, which enhance and protect the water quality of the river and its tributaries. The preserve's upland areas consist primarily of various aged loblolly pine stands with great opportunities for longleaf pine restoration. The tract provides valuable habitat for deer, turkey, wood duck and quail. The Marsh tract was once known for its quail population and has tremendous restoration potential for this species. The Pee Dee River corridor provides habitat for threatened and endangered species such as wood storks and short-nosed sturgeon. Protecting the corridor is also key to sustaining the current black bear population of Coastal S.C.



"The project is especially significant because similar tracts in the area are rapidly being split and sold," according to Marvin Davant, executive director of the S.C. Conservation Bank. "The dedication of the beautiful Marsh Furniture property is the celebration of a vision to conserve and protect our wild and natural areas. A vision that reaches well into the future."

## Edisto Savannah RC&D to Award \$35,000 in Grants

Eligible Counties Include Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg

The Edisto-Savannah Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, in cooperation with the SWCD's in Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg, will award approximately \$35,000 in grants to successful applicants from those counties. The grant application, in addition to eligibility criteria, can be downloaded at [www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/edisto\\_rcd.html](http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/edisto_rcd.html). Completed applications must be received at any of the six SWCD offices listed above by close of business June 30, 2006. Grants will be awarded by August 30, 2006.

Organizations applying for grant monies should illustrate a proven track record in the area of requested assistance and be adequately staffed and financed to carry out the proposed project. The RC&D Council cannot give grants for items that have already been purchased or for services that have already been provided. In addition, applicant organizations must have a parent office located within the six-county RC&D area.

The Edisto Savannah RC&D Council is comprised of citizens from the six county area who provide leadership in the implementation of projects including natural resource conservation and education, waste and flood management, and additional projects that improve the quality of life of the area's citizens.

For more information, please contact (803) 649-4221, ext. 6.

## Landowner Enhances Wildlife Habitat for Quail

by Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

Good land managers know that conservation practices that enhance wildlife habitat are beneficial. Lee Bowers from Hampton County is one of these good land managers. As a crop farmer, he takes pride in his land and the creatures that live there. With technical assistance from NRCS, Bowers installed eight acres of quail buffers on his farm through a ten year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) easement.

The quail buffers enhance the quail habitat on the farm and add diversity. On his 200-acre farm, Bowers established buffers around his crop fields. These buffers provide rich habitat for the quail, allowing them a place to roost and live without being disturbed. In

addition to the buffers, Bower also planted a variety of plants, trees and food plots to attract quail. Wheat and lespedeza bi-color were planted as supplements, as well as 100 Saw Tooth oak trees, which grow fast and produce acorns that the quail like to eat. The abundant food source and rich habitat have greatly increased the number of quail seen on Bowers' land. "Since we established the buffers, I have seen at least three different coveys of quail," said Bower. "Before the buffers, I saw absolutely none."

NRCS assisted Bowers in the design of the conservation plan and with the buffer installation. But, Bowers also put forth his own time and energy, planting many of the food plots himself. "Mr. Bowers is a dedicated conservationist and has taken the proper steps to promote good habitat for quail and increase their population," said Steve Edwards, Lowcountry RC&D Coordinator.

Bowers is pleased with the progress that has been made to increase the quail population. He also plans to plant additional food plots in hopes of attracting more quail, including a plot of sunflowers.

"I appreciate the assistance I received from NRCS, and I look forward to doing more to make my place attractive to wildlife."



*Bowers established quail buffers in an effort to enhance wildlife habitat on his 200-acre crop farm.*



## Florence County's Pee Dee Research and Education Center Outdoor Classroom

The newest classroom at Clemson University's Pee Dee Research and Education Center (REC) in Florence County is "as big as all outdoors!" It's known as the Outdoor Education Trail, and it offers visitors a chance to get in touch with the natural resources of South Carolina's Pee Dee region and learn how to be good stewards of the environment.

"We have approximately 2,300 acres here at the Pee Dee REC, and it contains a wealth of ecosystems which our increasingly urban society needs to stay in touch with, ranging from agricultural lands to forests, wetlands and lake environments," said Jim Frederick, Clemson University agronomist. He expects the trail to be open to the general public by next fall.



A recent tour of the center highlighted 20 different learning stations, some offering sturdy information kiosks and other areas still in development. The stations cover topics ranging from innovative cropping systems, wildlife management on the farm, longleaf pines, crops and crop products, fallow field management, forest resources, American Indian culture, plants for the home and garden, and more.

One of the main stops is an area where visitors can see what works to attract wildlife to a backyard. Created by Clemson Wildlife Biologist T. J. Savereno, the stop demonstrates what types of plants will attract various types of wildlife, how to make feeders, and the benefits of shelter areas such as stone walls and brush piles.

Work has started on a Birdhouse Row, which will feature all types of houses for placement on field edges, in the woods, and on or near water for waterfowl. Also, a Home and Garden center will feature five subcenters – organic gardening and composting, poisonous and medicinal plants, seasonal gardening, pest management, and energy sources. Within the coming year Frederick hopes work can begin on the Outdoor Learning Class-

room, a fisheries learning center, a forest ecosystems area, and centers highlighting nutrition and healthy lifestyles, types of pine trees and their uses, longleaf pine restoration, and soils and soil conservation.

For more information, contact Frederick at (843) 662-3526, ext. 228, or [jfrdrck@clemson.edu](mailto:jfrdrck@clemson.edu).

**East Region**  
  
**Coordinator's Conference**  
 Charleston, South Carolina

**August 14-18, 2006**  
**Charleston, SC**

**The Spirit of America Shines  
 Through  
 Volunteers**






**Participants will discuss topics relating to managing Earth Team volunteers, recording volunteer hours, recruiting volunteers, and participate in a work day on the Sullivan's Island dune restoration project.**

**Find out more by visiting**  
[http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/ET\\_East\\_Conference\\_2006.html](http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/ET_East_Conference_2006.html)

# Welcome

## New

# NRCS Employees



**Tricia McCalla**  
NRCS State Office  
Financial Technician

**Tricia was born in Maroon Town, Jamaica.** She lived there during her early years and relocated with her father to Fontana, California. After completing high school, she joined the U.S. Army as an Administrative Specialist. While in the military, she was stationed in South Korea and

Fort Drum, New York. After completing her active duty contract, she relocated to Virginia and attended college and continued her military career as a simultaneous member of the Virginia National Guard and ROTC program. She graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2004 with a degree in finance. She started her post undergraduate experience as a Fiscal Specialist with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. She recently relocated to South Carolina with her husband, who is stationed at Fort Jackson. Welcome Tricia!

**Born in Charleston, Matt grew up in Summerville, SC.** Much of his youth was spent fishing in the Sandpits and playing in the Edisto. After marrying his wife Jennifer in 1998, they moved to Easley, SC, where Matt attended Clemson University. In December of 2002, he graduated with a B.S. in Forest Resource Management. During his college career, he worked part-time for Clemson and SCDNR, as well as several summer internships.



**Matt Barrington**  
Edgefield NRCS  
Soil Conservationist

Following graduation he spent two years in Beaufort, SC. In 2004, he accepted a position with the Greenville SWCD. When not working, Matt enjoys spending time with his wife, Jennifer, and two year old daughter, Caroline. He also enjoys spending time on the water, working outdoors, and turkey hunting. Welcome Matt!



**Elyse Benson**  
Ninety-Six District  
RC&D Coordinator

first few weeks in Greenwood!

A graduate of Oregon State University (OSU) in forest management, Benson took all the rangeland classes she could to qualify as a range conservationist. She served 4 years as a soil judge at OSU, and participated in national competitions each year. Before transferring to NRCS, she worked as a forester and a range conservationist with the US Forest Service in Oregon and Washington.

Her early years with NRCS were spent on the dry side of the state of Washington in Colville, Ephrata, and Waterville, where she worked with forestland operators, dryland wheat farmers, and beef producers. She also had mega-Farm Bill duties, with over 1,100 CRP contracts! "I spent four of my 18 years of federal service in the Las Vegas office as an urban planner where I was charged with adapting NRCS standards to fit urban settings, and I participated in many community planning efforts." She was also heavily involved in invasive species issues, writing a number of grants to support weed control projects covering an area roughly the size of New Jersey.

Aside from her job, Benson paints, sews, beads, gardens, and does some light birding. She also plays old-time fiddle. In Las Vegas, her band played for monthly contra dances and occasional special events. She brings with her to South Carolina her cat, Marilyn, who made the journey across the country with style and grace (as long as she was not too far from her dish). Benson's lovely daughter, Iris, is a landscape architect working for the city of Salem, Oregon, and is getting married in September. Welcome Elyse!



Jackie graduated from Tennessee Technological University (TTU) in May of 2004 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (concentration in Environmental AgriScience). While in college, Jackie was a member of the TTU Soil Judging Team, participating in Clemson, SC; College Station, Texas; Martin, TN; and Champagne, IL. She was a member of the Environmental Conservation Club and participated in the Soils portion of Ag-in-the-Classroom.



**Jackie Reed**  
Lee County NRCS  
Soil Scientist  
Career Intern

Jackie is from the small town of Woodbury, TN, located 50 miles southeast of Nashville. She graduated from Cannon County High School in 1998 where she was the Treasurer and President of the FFA, awarded the Ag Medal her senior year, and FFA Member of the Year in 1996-97.

Her hobbies include playing and coaching softball, spending time with her niece and nephews, traveling, and being outdoors. Welcome Jackie!



**Eric Harper**  
Laurens NRCS  
Soil Conservation  
Technician

Eric began his career with NRCS in May 1992, as a high school co-op in rural Covington, Indiana. His collective years with the agency total 14.

While working in a four-county workgroup, he honed his engineering skills dealing with soil erosion conservation practices. He also took Environmental Science courses at Purdue while working full time.

In 2001, he relocated to south Florida, where he was exposed to resource issues such as water conservation, irrigation system designs and evaluations, pasture management, and citrus crops. After surviving three direct hits from three major hurricanes, he is pleased to relocate to Laurens, South Carolina. While working with NRCS, he plans to start classes this fall at Clemson to major in Natural Resources Management.

Harper married his wife, Forest, in May 2002. Welcome Eric!

Larry Coburn has 12 years of career experience with NRCS, and comes to South Carolina from Eatonton, Georgia, where he was been for the last eight years. During his career with NRCS in Georgia, Coburn served for eight years as the Tribal Liaison.

He was raised in a military family, so he says, "We moved around a lot!" He has been married for eight years, has two kids (who reside in Augusta, Georgia) and has his sixth grandchild on the way! He too lives in Augusta, and enjoys his Harley Davidson, barbequing, and spending time in the woods. Welcome Larry!



**Larry Coburn**  
Aiken NRCS  
Soil Conservation  
Technician

Myra Jones is originally from the outskirts of Pendleton, South Carolina, in the Six and Twenty Community. She graduated from Pendleton High School and went on to serve as Vice-President for the South Carolina FFA. She graduated from Clemson University in the fall of 2004 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Crop and Soil Environmental Science and a minor in Forest Management.



**Myra Jones**  
Greenwood NRCS  
Soil Scientist  
Career Intern

While at Clemson, Myra competed on the University's soil judging team for two years and traveled to the University of Tennessee at Martin and Auburn University. After graduation she and her husband Jaime moved to Barnwell, SC, where she then served a little over a year with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control in the Waste Water Program.

While serving Aiken, Calhoun, Orangeburg, Allendale, Barnwell, and Bamberg counties, Myra monitored stream water quality, waste water facilities, storm water construction projects, and agricultural inspections and complaints. Welcome to NRCS Myra!

# PERSONNEL NEWS

## **NEW EMPLOYEES**

Jeffrey "Matt" Barrington was selected as a Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, for the Edgefield Field Office, effective April 16, 2006

Elyse R. Benson, was selected as the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator, GS-0401-12, for Greenwood, effective April 30, 2006 .

Eric Harper was selected as the Soil Conservation Technician, GS-0458-07 for the Laurens Field Office, effective May 14, 2006

Larry Coburn was selected as the Soil Conservation Technician, GS-0458-07 for the Aiken Field Office, effective April 30, 2006

Tricia McCalla was selected as the Financial Assistant, GS-0503-07, in the State Office, effective April 30, 2006

Jackie Reed was selected as a Career Intern Soil Scientist for the Bishopville Soil Survey Office, effective April 15, 2006.

Myra Jones was selected as a Career Intern Soil Scientist for the Greenwood Soil Survey Office, effective May 14, 2006

## **PROMOTIONS**

Caleb Gulley, was promoted to Soil Scientist, GS-0470-09, in the Bishopville Field Office, effective April 16, 2006

Emily Pohlman was promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the Aiken Field Office, effective May 14, 2006

Kellee Melton, the State Technology Coordinator was promoted to GS-0457-12 effective May 14, 2006

Lynette Savereno was promoted to Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator, GS-0401-12 in Darlington, Effective April 2, 2006

Sabrenna Bennett, was promoted to Program Analyst in the State Office GS-0343-09, effective May 28, 2006

Sudie Daves, the Wildlife Biologist in the Orangeburg Field Office was promoted to GS-0486-11, effective May 14, 2006

## **REASSIGNMENT**

Alex Johnson was reassigned as Soil Conservationist, in the Marion field office, effective April 2, 2006.

Alex Johnson was detailed on an international travel assignment to Afghanistan for 9 months effective April 5, 2006.

## **CONVERSION TO PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT**

George Sullivan, GIS Specialist, GS-0150-11 in the State Office, was converted from a Career Intern appointment to a Career Conditional Appointment effective April 16, 2006.

Carly Showalter, a student in the Abbeville/McCormick Field Office, was converted from a Student Appointment to a Career Conditional Appointment, GS-0457-07, effective May 28, 2006.

## **RESIGNATION**

Soil Conservationist Monica Franklin, of the St Matthews Field Office, resigned effective April 15, 2006

Soil Conservation Technician, Thomas Lindler of the Sumter Field Office, resigned effective April 4, 2006

Soil Conservation Technician, William Allread, of the St. Matthews Field Office, resigned effective May 6, 2006

## **NEW STUDENTS**

Frank Morelli, GS-0499-04, was selected as a student intern in the Barnwell Field Office effective May 14, 2006.

Jazmond Carter, GS-0499-04, was selected as a student intern in the Abbeville/McCormick Field Office effective May 14, 2006.

Jennifer Miller, GS-0499-03, was selected as a student intern in the Pickens Field Office effective May 14, 2006.

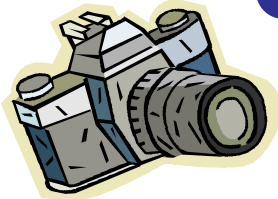
Jill Jeffords, GS-0499-03, was selected as a student intern in the Walhalla Field Office effective May 14, 2006.

Stephanie Moore, GS-0499-03, was selected as a student intern in the Greenville Field Office effective May 14, 2006.



*left to right: NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas with Jazmond Carter (Abbeville/McCormick), Jennifer Miller (Pickens), Stephanie Moore (Greenville), Jill Jeffords (Walhalla), and Frank Morelli (Barnwell).*





# Conservation Photo Contest Winners



*"Bucket-a-beans," by Trinette Vereen,  
Williamsburg NRCS District Conservationist*



*Untitled, by Charles Babb, Chesterfield NRCS  
District Conservationist*



*Hoover Plantation, Jasper County, by Sudie Daves  
Thomas, NRCS Wildlife Biologist*



*"Weathered Barn," Barnwell County, by Linda  
Pickering, Administrative Assistant*



**Conservation Photo  
Contest Winners**  
*continued*

*"Field of Gold," by Doug  
Deaderick, Lexington NRCS  
District Conservationist*



*"Clover Bee," by Debbie Mann, Georgetown  
NRCS District Conservationist*



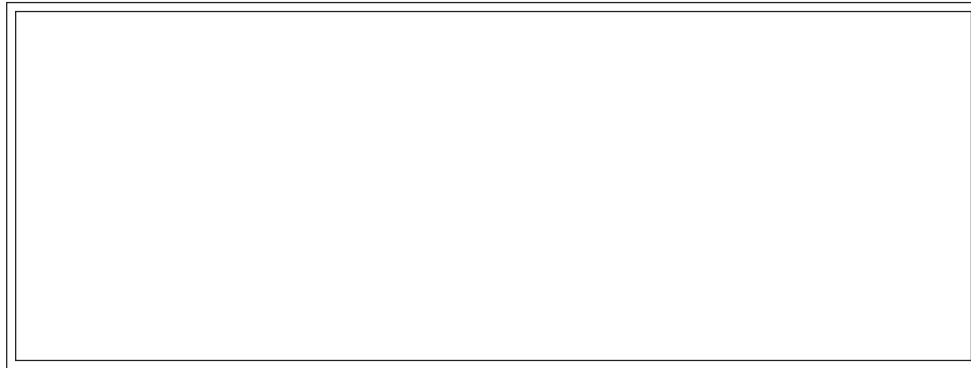
*Above: "Dogwood," by York NRCS Soil Scientist  
Lance Brewington*



*Left: "Butterflies on Steele Creek (in Fort Mill)," by  
York NRCS District Conservationist, Cliff Eaddy*



# Helping People Help the Land



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Assistant Editor: Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

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